

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUANDA 00232 01 OF 02 031424Z

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3295

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUANDA 0232

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV AO

SUBJECT: MPLA DEPUTY CHIEF TALKS ABOUT CHIPENDA, CABINDA, ELECTIONS

1. I TALKED WITH LUCIO LARA ON FEBRUARY 27 TO FIND OUT MPLA ATTITUDES ON A NUMBER OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS. HE MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS.

2. CHIPENDA: ALL THREE LIBERATION GROUPS HAD AGREED THAT CHIPENDA WAS NOT A LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF ANY GROUP AND THAT ONLY MPLA, UNITA AND FNLA WERE TO BE ALLOWED TO FUNCTION IN ANGOLA. NEVERTHELESS, CHIPENDA BEGAN BRINGING MEN AND ARMS INTO LUANDA AND OPENING OFFICES. MPLA APPEALED TO THE OTHER GROUPS AND THE PORTUGUESE TO DO SOMETHING, BUT ALL THEY GOT WERE STALLING TACTICS AND A VAGUE PROMISE OF AN INVESTIGATION. MPLA BECAME CONCERNED AT THE SIZE OF THE CHIPENDA INCURSION AND DECIDED TO FORCIBLY EVICT CHIPENDA AS A WARNING TO ALL THAT MPLA IS READY AND WILLING TO DEFEND ITS INTERESTS. AS FOR CHIPENDA'S DECISION TO INTEGRATE HIS FORCES INTO FNLA, LARA SAID THAT MPLA HAS NO PROBLEM WITH THE MOVE, THEY JUST WANT CHIPENDA TO LEGITIMIZE HIMSELF. THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT HE IS

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 LUANDA 00232 01 OF 02 031424Z

UP TO, AS HE HAS NOT YET FORMALLY AFFILITATED WITH FNLA.

THE CHIPENDA COMMANDERS WHO DEFECTED TO MPLA DID BRING SOME MEN WITH THEM, ALTHOUGH NOT A GREAT MANY. WHEN I SUGGESTED THAT THE ATTACK ON CHIPENDA HAD FURTHER SOLIDIFIED THE GROWING REPUTATION OF MPLA AS A VIOLENCE PRONE ORGANIZATION, LARA REPLIED THAT MPLA HAS ALWAYS HAD THAT REPUTATION AND THAT HE IS UNCONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE IMAGE PROBLEMS. A PRINCIPLE WAS AT ISSUE AND MPLA COULD NOT LET ITS RIGHTS BE TRAMPLED.

3. MPLA STRENGTH: I TURNED NEXT TO MPLA SUPPORT. LARA SAID THE MYTH THAT MPLA IS AN URBAN BASED ORGANIZATION LIMITED TO LUANDA AND A FEW OTHER AREAS HAS BEEN FOSTERED BY POLITICAL ILLITERATES, BY WHICH HE MEANT THOSE AMONG THE WHITE MIDDLE CLASS WHO HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE POLITICAL DYNAMIC IS ALL ABOUT. MPLA HAS POLITICAL STRENGTH THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND OVERWHELMING SUPPORT IN LUANDA. UNITA IS POPULAR TOO, ESPECIALLY IN THE CENTER OF THE COUNTRY AND HAS SOME STRENGTH IN THE LUANDA MUCEQUES AMONG SOUTHERN BLACKS, BUT THIS IS NOT GREAT. FNLA HAS VERY LITTLE SUPPORT, MAINLY BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE AFRAID OF THEM. THEY ARE POLITE ENOUGH DOWNTOWN, BUT IN THE GHETTO ALLEYS THEY ARE TOO QUICK TO USE THEIR RIFLE BUTTS AND FISTS.

4. ELECTIONS: IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO HAVE ELECTIONS BECAUSE OF LACK OF TIME AND THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE ANGOLAN SITUATION. I SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY OF AN AGREEMENT TO CONTINUE THE COALITION AFTER INDEPENDENCE. LARA MENTIONED AGOSTINHO NETO'S IDEA OF A "LISTA UNICA," WHICH WOULD BE A SLATE FOR THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AGREED UPON BY THE THREE MOVEMENTS. THE ELECTION OF THE SLATE WOULD BE A MERE FORMALITY. THE ONE BIG PROBLEM WITH THIS IDEA, SAID LARA, IS HOW TO APPORTION THE SEATS. HE BELIEVES THERE WILL BE ELECTIONS, HOWEVER, BECAUSE UNITA WANTS THEM.

5. CABINDA: THERE IS ANTI-MPLA FEELING IN SOUTHERN CABINDA AND ALONG THE COAST, WHERE THE MPLA DID NOT FIGHT. FLEC HAS INFLUENCE IN THESE AREAS AND THEY HAVE EXPLOITED CERTAIN MINOR INCIDENTS INVOLVING MPLA TROOPS TO INSTILL FEAR AMONG THE POPULACE. IN THE NORTH, WHERE MPLA CARRIED OUT A LONG STRUGGLE, THE POPULACE IDENTIFIES WITH MPLA AND ANGOLA. ANGOLA MUST NOT WANT CABINDA BECAUSE OF HER OIL WEALTH, BUT BECAUSE OF THE TIES THAT BIND THE TWO REGIONS; IN SHORT, NEO-COLONIALIST ATTITUDES MUST BE AVOIDED AT ALL COSTS. AS FOR CABINDA'S STATUS, AUTONOMY MIGHT BE A LONG

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PAGE 03 LUANDA 00232 01 OF 02 031424Z

TERM SOLUTION, BUT THE VERY WORD CONNOTES MORE, PERHAPS, THAN ONE INTENDS AND COULD LEAD TO UNFORESEEN COMPLICATIONS. A FORMULA FOR THE NEAR TERM MIGHT WELL BE A SPECIAL ECONOMIC STATUTE FOR CABINDA AND LOCAL BOYS IN THE GOVERNMENT THERE.

6. PEOPLES COMMITTEES: THESE SPRANG UP SPONTANEOUSLY IN THE GHETTOES AS SELF-DEFENSE UNITS DURING THE VIOLENCE LAST YEAR. THE LEADERS WERE YOUNG AND GUTSY AND, IN MANY CASES, SEMI-

DELINQUENTS. THERE WERE MANY EXCESSES AND NO DISCIPLINE.
SINCE ARRIVING IN LUANDA MPLA BEEN WORKING TO ERADICATE THESE
UNDISCIPLINED ELEMENTS, BUT IT IS LONG SLOW PROCESS. MPLA HAS
MANAGED TO INDUCE SOME OF THEM TO GO EAST FOR TRAINING, BUT
OTHERS STILL RESIST.

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PAGE 01 LUANDA 00232 02 OF 02 032242Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUANDA 00232

7. ARMED CHILDREN: THIS IS A MYTH SPREAD BY ANTI-MPLA
ELEMENTS. WHAT MAY HAVE HAPPENED IS THAT OPA (ANGOLAN PIONEERS
ORGANIZATION, AN MPLA YOUTH GROUP) KIDS HAVE BEEN
SEEN MARCHING AROUND IN UNIFORMS AND CARRYING EITHER WOODEN
WEAPONS OR TOYS THEY HAVE PICKED UP. I ASKED WHETHER MPLA HAD
ARMED ANY YOUNG PEOPLE FOURTEEN OR FIFTEEN YEARS OLD. DEFINITELY
NOT, SAID LARA.

8. LARA GAVE ME THE FIRST CORROBORATION I HAVE HAD OF THE PROGRESS
OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN NETO AND THE ANDRADE FACTION WHICH
I REPORTED IN AN EARLIER CABLE. HE SAID THAT THE MPLA IS BEING
REORGANIZED AND THAT HE MAY BE MOVING ON TO OTHER DUTIES. READERS
WILL RECALL THAT ONE OF THE ANDRADE FACTION DEMANDS WAS THAT LARA
BE SHUNTED TO SOME OTHER, LESS IMPORTANT, POST.

9. LARA'S REPUTED ANTI-WHITE HATRED CAME THROUGH IN OUR CONVERSATION

AS CONTEMPT FOR MIDDLE CLASS WHITES WHO ARE FAT, DUMB AND HAPPY IN THEIR SITUATIONS AND REFUSE TO SEE BEYOND THEIR NEEDS AND DESIRES. HE MADE SEVERAL REFERENCES DURING OUR TALK TO THE FACT THAT MPLA IS NOT COMMUNIST AND HAS NO NEED TO FEAR TAKING THE SIDE OF THE PEOPLE AND COMING OUT STRONGLY FOR REDISTRIBUTION OF INCOME, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 LUANDA 00232 02 OF 02 032242Z

NO MATTER WHAT BARBS AND STINGS ARE HURLED BY OTHER GROUPS. THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS HE SEES FOR THE TRANSITION PERIOD ARE THE ECONOMIC SITUATION, THE NEED TO HAVE A COHERENT FUNCTIONING GOVERNMENT IN PLACE ON INDEPENDENCE DAY WITH A SENSE OF DIRECTION AND THE OVERWHELMING IMPORTANCE OF PREPARING THE POPULACE NOW FOR INDEPENDENCE - GIVING THEM CONFIDENCE IN THOSE WHO WILL ADMINISTER THEIR AFFAIRS AFTER INDEPENDENCE. IF THIS SYMBIOSIS IS NOT ESTABLISHED, HE FORESEES REAL TROUBLE. HE IS NOT OPTIMISTIC THE GOAL CAN BE ACHIEVED. KILLORAN

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